

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT:REUTER ITEM RE: AMB. GETACHEW MEKASHA

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, FOLLOWING REUTER'S NEWS TICKER
ITEM DATEDILED LOS ANGELES 9 MARCH TRANSMITTED:

2. BEGIN TEXT: ETHIOPIA'S AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT GETACHEW
MEKASHA TODAY ANNOUNCED HERE HE WAS RESIGNING BECAUSE OF
PURGES WITHIN HIS COUNTRY AND WOULD SEEK POLITICAL
ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES.

MR. MEKASHA, A FORMER MINISTER OF INFORMATION IN THE LATE
EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE'S GOVERNMENT, SAID IN AN INTERVIEW
WITH THE LOS ANGELES TIMES THAT HE WOULD CALL ON THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT TO PRESS FOR INVESTIGATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS IN HIS COUNTRY.

ETHIOPIA RIGHT NOW IS GRIPPED BY FEAR, HE SAID, CLAIMING
POLITICAL SUPPRESSION IN HIS COUNTRY WAS MORE COLD-BLOODED
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AND RUTHLESS THAN THAT BY PRESIDENT IDI AMIN IN UGANDA.

MR. MEKASHA SAID THE RECENT GUN BATTLE BETWEEN MEMBERS OF
THE ETHIOPIAN DERGUE, OR RULING MILITARY COUNCIL, WAS AN
AMBUSH STAGED BY DERGUE CHAIRMAN COLONEL MENGISTU HAILE
MARIAM.
THAT WAS NO SHOOT-OUT AT ALL, HE TOLD THE TIMES.

MENGISTU SIMPLY LAID A TRAP FOR THE OTHERS.

WHEN (BRIG. GEN.) TEFFERI BENTI, (FORMER DERGUE CHAIRMAN) AND THE OTHERS ARRIVED AT THE PALACE, THEY WERE ARRESTED ONE BY ONE AND SHOT. MENGISTU BELIEVED HIS POWER WAS BEING THREATENED SO HE SIMPLY HAD HIS RIVALS SHOT, HE SAID.

MR. MEKASHA SAID HIS ACCOUNT OF THE POWER STRUGGLE HAD COME FROM WITHIN THE ORIGINALLY 120-MEMBER DERGUE, WHICH HE SAID HAD NOW BEEN REDUCED TO 40 BY PURGES, EXECUTIONS AND ARRESTS.

HE SAID THESE EVENTS WERE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO PEOPLE LIKE HIMSELF WHO ORIGINALLY WELCOMED THE MILITARY TAKEOVER.

THE MILITARY REGIME HAS BECOME NOT ONLY ONE OF THE MOST HATED IN THE COUNTRY'S LONG HISTORY BUT ALSO ONE OF THE MOST ISOLATED IN THE WORLD TODAY; HE SAID.

MR. MEKASHA SAID HE HOPED TO SETTLE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND WRITE A BOOK ON ETHIOPIA WHILE CONTINUING TO WORK FOR A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE IN HIS COUNTRY.

END TEXT.

3. DEPT. WILL DRAW ON STATE 48415 IN PROVIDING SPOKESMANH PRESS GUIDANCE.

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DECLASSIFY UPON RECEIPT

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Message Attributes

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